

I've done the best I could to turn this country around and to get us moving in the right direction. But the best is still out there. That's what I want you to believe. And forget about me being President; as a citizen, I have waited 35 years for my country again to be in the position to build the future of our dreams for our children.

And it is a so much more interesting country now because so many of you are here. And the world is more interesting, and the potential is so great. But whether we seize it depends upon whether we understand what the issue is about, whether we work and vote, and whether people like Cynthia are in the United States Congress.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Saeid and Sudabeh Sadri; Gov. Roy Barnes of Georgia and his wife, Marie; Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta; State Representatives Tyrone Brooks, Calvin Smyre, and J. E. (Billy) McKinney; State Senators Gloria S. Butler and Robert Brown; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); and NBA Atlanta Hawk Dikembe Mutombo.

Statement on Proposals To Reopen Trade in Elephant Ivory and Whale Products

April 14, 2000

I am deeply concerned that successful efforts by the international community to protect endangered species would be undermined by proposals to reopen trade in elephant ivory and whale products. We will oppose these proposals and urge other nations currently meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, to maintain current trade restrictions. I am proud of the fact that the United States has been a worldwide leader in the protection of elephants and whales. We will continue our work with international partners to protect these magnificent animals.

Statement on Signing Legislation Designating the Joseph Iletto Post Office

April 14, 2000

Today I signed legislation designating the United States Post Office located at 14701 Peyton Drive in Chino Hills, California, as the "Joseph Iletto Post Office." Joseph Iletto was a Filipino-American postal worker who was tragically murdered last year in a crime of hate. He was a dedicated public servant, killed simply because he was an Asian-American who worked for his country's Government. It is a fitting tribute to the life and memory of Mr. Iletto that we name this Post Office in his honor.

During the last year, we have all been shaken by violent acts like the murder of Joseph Iletto, acts that strike at the very values that define us as a nation. Now is the time for us to take strong and decisive action to fight hate crimes, and I call on Congress, at long last, to pass strong hate crimes legislation. It is time for us all to raise our voices against intolerance and to build the one America that our hearts tell us we can be.

NOTE: H.R. 3189, approved April 14, was assigned Public Law No. 106-184.

Statement on Russian State Duma Action on the START II Treaty

April 14, 2000

I am very pleased that the Russian State Duma today approved the START II Treaty—a critical step toward the treaty's entering into force. This action builds on decades of cooperation between the United States and Russia to reduce nuclear arms and clearly advances the interests of both countries. Together with the START I Treaty, it will result in a two-thirds reduction in the strategic nuclear weapons that the Soviet Union and the United States maintained at the height of the cold war. START II will make our people safer and our partnership with a democratic Russia stronger. It will open the

door to further significant steps to reduce nuclear arms and the nuclear danger, a course that is strongly supported by the international community and has strong bipartisan support in the United States.

I congratulate President-elect Putin and his government, members of the State Duma, and Russian citizens who supported this giant step toward a safer future. I look forward to prompt action on the treaty by the Federation Council. Now, we and Russia can and must seize this opportunity to intensify our discussions on both START III and the ABM Treaty, so we can take further concrete steps this year to strengthen the security of the United States, Russia, and indeed the whole world.

Proclamation 7292—National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, 2000

April 14, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Organ and tissue transplantation offers us the extraordinary opportunity to share with others one of our most precious gifts—the gift of life. By donating tissues and organs, living donors and the families who have lost loved ones are rewarded with the knowledge that they have saved and enhanced many lives. Thanks to donors' generosity and compassion, transplant recipients across our country are able to work, care for their families, and look forward to a brighter future. Thanks to donors' selflessness, many children who were not expected to see their first birthday are playing, learning to walk, and entering school.

The future of the thousands of Americans awaiting transplants, however, depends on the willingness of their fellow citizens to become organ and tissue donors. More than 68,000 patients are on the national organ transplant waiting list; each day, 13 of them will die because the organs they need have not been donated; and every 16 minutes, a new name will be added to that waiting list.

To address this critical and growing need, Vice President Gore and Secretary of Health

and Human Services Shalala launched the National Organ and Tissue Donation Initiative in December of 1997. This public-private partnership was designed to raise awareness of the success of organ and tissue transplantation and to educate our citizens about the urgent need for increased donation. Working with partners such as health care organizations, estate planning attorneys, faith communities, educational organizations, the media, minority organizations, and business leaders, the Initiative is reaching out to Americans of all ages, backgrounds, and races, asking them to consider donation. In its first year alone, the Initiative made a measurable impact, as organ donation increased by 5.6 percent.

But donations are still falling short nationwide. As we observe National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, I urge all Americans to consider becoming donors. Becoming a prospective organ and tissue donor is an easy, two-step process. Potential donors need only indicate their intention on their driver's license or donor card, which is available from a number of organizations by mail or on-line, and notify their families and friends of their wish to donate. I also encourage organ and tissue recipients to tell others how their lives and health have changed because of the generosity of a donor and his or her family; and I join the friends and families of donors in remembering with pride and gratitude all those who gave of themselves so that others might live.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 16 through April 22, 2000, as National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week. I urge all health care professionals, educators, the media, public and private organizations concerned with organ donation and transplantation, and all Americans to join me in promoting greater awareness and acceptance of this humanitarian action.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the